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General Assembly
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Agenda items 36, 37, 44, 56, 101 and 160

The situation in the Middle East

The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security

Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit

Peace, security and reunification on the Korean peninsula

International drug control

Measures to eliminate international terrorism

Security Council
Fifty-seventh year

Letter dated 4 December 2002 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of the joint communiqué on the outcome of the meeting of the Council of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the member States of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, adopted in Moscow on 23 November 2002 (see annex).

On behalf of the Permanent Missions to the United Nations of the member countries of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, and as the representative of the country in which the meeting was held, I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 36, 37, 44, 56, 101 and 160, and also of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Sergey **Lavrov**

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Annex to the letter dated 4 December 2002 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Russian]

Joint communiqué on the outcome of the meeting of the Foreign Ministers Council of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization

On 23 November 2002, a meeting of the Foreign Ministers Council of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) was held in Moscow. The participants were: Tang Jiaxuan, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China; Kasymzhomart Tokayev, Secretary of State and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan; Askar Aitmatov, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic; Igor Ivanov, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation; Talbak Nazarov, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Tajikistan; and Abdulaziz Kamilov, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

A constructive and intense debate was held on two sets of issues: SCO activities and urgent international problems.

It was noted with satisfaction that cooperation within the framework of SCO in various fields, as provided for in the organization's Charter, signed at the highest level on 7 June 2002 in St. Petersburg, has been developing steadily and becoming ever more diverse. The sides agreed to prepare concrete proposals for further structuring and deepening multilateral cooperation in the framework of the organization in advance of the next meeting of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the six countries.

The ministers noted that, in accordance with the agreements reached at the St. Petersburg meeting of the heads of the member States SCO, intensive work was under way to put into operation speedily SCO mechanisms. Thus far, key questions had been decided concerning the establishment of the SCO secretariat in Beijing, and common approaches to resolving issues relating to the SCO budget and the establishment of the headquarters of the SCO Regional Antiterrorist Structure in Bishkek had been worked out. The National Coordinators Council and relevant expert working groups were in the process of preparing the draft international legal instruments necessary to ensure the functioning of SCO and its agencies, with a view to their submission for signature at the next meeting of heads of State in 2003.

It was deemed advisable that the foreign-policy departments of the six countries, guided by the St. Petersburg Declaration, signed at the highest level, should agree specific proposals, in advance of the next meeting of the Foreign Ministers Council, for promoting multilateral cooperation in the framework of SCO to counter the growing threat of illicit trafficking in narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and precursors.

On the basis of the fundamental principle of the openness of SCO and the fact that its activities are not directed against any States or international associations, and striving to ensure that SCO, an organization already in the process of being established, can actively participate in international relations and make a genuine contribution to strengthening stability, security and peace at the regional and global levels, the Ministers have signed an Interim Framework governing SCO relations

with other international organizations and States, to apply until the entry into force of the corresponding permanent SCO normative instruments.

Having exchanged views on the world situation, the Ministers noted the urgent need to strengthen the efforts of all countries in combating international terrorism, separatism and extremism, organized crime, illicit trafficking in drugs and arms, the spread of weapons of mass destruction and the means for their delivery, environmental degradation, the depletion of natural resources, mass illegal migration, persistent poverty and backwardness, HIV/AIDS and other new challenges. The Ministers reaffirmed the importance of the speedy establishment of a global system for counteracting contemporary threats and challenges, to include appropriate multilateral cooperation mechanisms, inter alia, for early warning and the prevention of emerging threats, as well as a resolute and commensurate response, to them.

At the meeting, it was pointed out that, although the fight against terrorism was assuming global proportions, terrorist acts had not ceased and continued to pose a very grave threat to international peace and security. In that connection, the Ministers expressed firm support for the resolute actions taken by the leaders of the Russian Federation to free hostages during the terrorist act that took place in October 2002 in Moscow, causing the death of a large number of innocent people.

The Ministers consider it an urgent task for the international community to strengthen the international legal basis for counter-terrorism, including through the earliest adoption of a comprehensive convention on international terrorism and an international convention for the suppression of acts of nuclear terrorism, with a simultaneous strengthening of the leadership role of the United Nations in combating terrorism. SCO member States support the international community's efforts to block the channels for financing terrorist activities, and also fully support the provisions of the Declaration on Measures to Counter the Financing of Terrorism approved by the Regional Forum (AFR) of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) in July 2002.

The Ministers noted a common understanding that the strengthening of stability in the Central Asian region continued to constitute a top priority for the SCO member States in the field of security. In this context, they reaffirmed the intention of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization to promote cooperation with international associations operating in the region.

The Ministers expressed concern at the upsurge in separatist tendencies in various Asian countries and the growing links between terrorism and separatism. They declared their firm resolve to continue to support fully States' efforts to ensure their sovereignty and territorial integrity and stressed the inadmissibility of attempts to justify terrorism and separatism on religious, national or political grounds.

The Ministers reaffirmed the common interest of SCO member States in Afghanistan's peaceful development and expressed support for Afghanistan's Transitional Authority in its efforts to normalize and stabilize the situation in the country and to achieve economic reconstruction pursuant to the Bonn Agreement of 5 December 2001, the decisions of the Loya Jirga convened in June 2002 and United Nations Security Council resolutions.

International cooperation to eliminate terrorism in Afghanistan was given a positive assessment. At the same time, serious concern was expressed at the evident

growth in narcotic drugs production as the chief source of financing for internal armed conflict and international terrorism, and the drug danger threatening SCO member countries. Proposals to establish anti-drug "security zones" along Afghanistan's borders were deemed useful in that connection.

The Ministers agreed that the six SCO member States would intensify their exchange of views on Afghan issues, inter alia, through their Permanent Representatives to the United Nations, including the questions of providing assistance to Afghanistan in tackling social and economic problems and rendering humanitarian aid to the Afghan people.

The Ministers voiced their support for international efforts — collective or individual — promoting the search for ways to establish peace and stability in the Middle East, as well as for the unconditional implementation by both parties to the conflict of the well-known United Nations Security Council resolutions.

The Ministers expressed the hope that Security Council resolution 1441 (2002) on Iraq as well as the resumption of the activities of international inspectors in Iraq would make it possible to settle the Iraq problem by peaceful means and with observance of all international norms.

The Ministers endorsed the nuclear-free status of the Korean peninsula, reaffirmed their support for the position in favour of settling relevant issues through peaceful dialogue, and emphasized that the maintenance of peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula was in the interests of all parties.

The Ministers considered that multilateral negotiation mechanisms for safeguarding security in Asia should complement each other rather than compete with one another.

The Ministers call for the promotion of a working relationship between SCO and ASEAN for the purpose of intensifying information exchange and cooperation.

The Ministers spoke in favour of the further dynamic development of the process pursued at the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia in accordance with the principles adopted at the Conference's First Summit (Almaty on 4 June 2002).

Support for the establishment in Asia of nuclear-weapon-free zones was reaffirmed on the understanding that such zones must take full account of the interests and concerns of all States.

The SCO member countries stand ready to engage in substantive cooperation on a basis of equality with all interested States and international associations in promoting peace and development in the region and throughout the world in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

23 November 2002